



Iron in the **gluten-free diet**

Why is iron important?

Iron is needed by the body to help make haemoglobin. Haemoglobin or 'Hb' is the protein found in red blood cells that carries oxygen around the body and gives blood its red colour.

Iron absorption within the gastrointestinal tract is not as good when the cells lining the gut are inflamed (which may be due to having gluten in the diet before diagnosis of Coeliac Disease or accidental exposure).

What can happen if you have low iron levels?

Lack of iron can result in anaemia, which can cause you to feel tired, weak, irritable and breathless.

For some people there is a greater risk of having low iron levels. These include:

- Babies and young children
- Teenagers (particularly girls)
- Women who have heavy periods
- People who give blood regularly
- Vegetarians and vegans
- Athletes

If your iron levels are low, it is important to include iron-rich foods as part of your daily diet.

How much iron do I need?

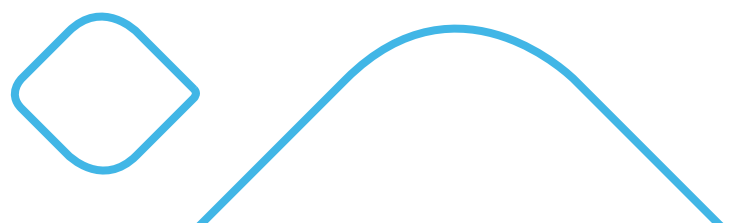
Your dietary iron requirement will differ depending on your age and gender. The table lists the recommended daily intakes in the UK:

Population Group	Recommended Daily Intake (mg)
1-3 years	6.9
4-6 years	6.1
7-10 years	8.7
Males 11-18 years	11.3
Males 19-50 years	8.7
Females 11-50 years	14.8
50+ years	8.7

Which foods are good sources of iron?

The following foods are particularly good sources:

- Liver/pate*
- Lean red meat



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- Game meats (e.g. venison, duck, goose)
 - Chicken and Turkey
 - Oily fish
 - Nuts and seeds
 - Pulses and Lentils
 - Eggs
 - Dark green leafy vegetables
 - Dried fruit
 - Fortified gluten-free breakfast cereals and breads

* Liver is not recommended for pregnant women because of its high vitamin A content. More information is given on the next page

Absorption of iron

As well as eating an adequate amount of iron containing foods, it is also important to help the body absorb the iron we consume.

- Vitamin C can **increase** absorption of iron from the diet. Aim to have vitamin C rich foods with your meals; for example, fresh fruits and vegetables, or drinks such as fresh orange juice.
- Tea and coffee contain compounds called tannins that can **decrease** the absorption of iron from the diet. Try to avoid these at mealtimes.

Vegetarians and vegans

Although iron from non-meat sources is more difficult for the body to absorb, a balanced and varied diet should still be able to provide adequate amounts of iron.

Including some of the foods listed on this information sheet and following the steps detailed above will help.

Your doctor, nurse or midwife may be able to provide additional advice and you can also ask for more advice from your dietitian doing your/ your child's annual coeliac review.

Do I need to take iron supplements?

If your iron levels are very low your doctor may recommend you take an iron supplement.

Iron supplements should only be taken on the advice of a doctor. Some people report side effects from iron supplements including constipation and nausea. If you experience any of these, speak to your doctor as an alternative treatment may be available.

Please note:

There is little risk of getting too much iron from food, however you can overdose with supplements which can be harmful. Please follow the manufacturers recommendations.

Food	Portion – Approximate weight	Iron (mg)
Meat and Fish		
Liver (lamb's) *	120g/4oz (raw weight)	9
Liver paté *	60g/2oz (average serving)	3.5
Beef, stewing steak or mince	150g/5oz (raw weight)	3
Beefburgers gluten free	2 x 60g/2oz burgers (raw weight)	3
Corned beef	60g/2oz (2 thin slices)	1.5
Chicken	120g/4oz (2-3 slices, cooked)	1
Turkey	120g/4oz (2-3 slices, cooked)	1
Venison	150g/5oz (average steak, cooked)	7.6
Duck	120g/4oz (2-3 slices, cooked)	2.5
Goose	120g/4oz (2-3 slices, cooked)	4
Salmon	100g/3½ oz (average fillet) (raw weight)	1
Sardines in tomato sauce	90g/3oz (3 sardines)	3
Cereals, Bread and Grains		
Gluten free Fortified breakfast cereals	30g/1oz (small bowl)	2.5
Brown rice	130g/4½oz (cooked)	0.5
Quinoa	130g/4½oz (cooked)	3.5
Gluten-free breads		
Warburtons Gluten Free White bread	~30g slice	0.7
Genius Brioche Buns	Per bun	2.1
Schar Balance of Both Bread	~40g slice	1.8
Beans and Pulses		
Baked beans	180g/6oz (small can)	2
Red kidney beans (canned)	100g/3½oz (3 tablespoons)	2
Whole lentils (green/brown)	30g/1oz raw (60g/2oz cooked - 1½ Tbsp)	2
Split red lentils	60g/2oz raw (120g/4oz cooked - 3 Tbsp)	3
Hummus	60g/2oz (2 Tbsp)	1
Tahini Paste	30g/1oz (1½ heaped teaspoons)	3
Nuts and Seeds		
Sunflower/Pumpkin seeds	10g/½oz	0.5
Fruits and Vegetables		
Curly Kale	90g/3oz (cooked) medium portion	2
Baby spinach	90g/3oz (cooked) medium portion	2.5
Broccoli (purple sprouting)	90g/3oz (cooked) medium portion	1
Dried figs	40g/1½ oz (2 figs)	1.5
Dried prunes	60g/2oz (6 prunes)	1.5
Dried fruit (raisins, dates, apricots)	30g/1oz (1 tablespoon)	1
Other sources		
Tofu	90g/3oz	1
Chocolate – plain, milk	60g/2oz bar	1.5 – 1
Gluten free Curry sauce (canned)	150g/5oz (average portion)	1.5
Wine – red	150ml glass	1.5
Peanut butter	30g/1oz (average on 2 slices of bread)	0.5
Mixed nuts	30g/1oz (small packet)	0.5
Cashews	20g nuts (around 10 nuts)	1.25
Almonds	20g nuts	1.0
Cocoa, drinking chocolate	15g/½oz (1 heaped teaspoon)	0.5

Further Information:

The following websites can provide further information:

British Dietetic Association: www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts

The Food Standards Agency: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide

Coeliac UK: <https://www.coeliac.org.uk/home/>

Nutrition and Dietetic Services

RUH dietetic Service

For **appointments** ring Therapies Admin on 01225 821241

To **contact your Coeliac team** email: ruh-tr.paediatriccoeliacteam@nhs.net

For urgent / clinical messages ring the Dietetic Clinical Answerphone 01225 826449 and the Dietitian will call you back.

Please speak slowly and include patient name, date of birth and hospital or NHS number. Include a brief message and the number you want to be contacted on – *please note all calls from the RUH will show as number withheld.*

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Please contact the Patient Support and Complaints Team (PSCT) if you require this leaflet in a different format or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email ruh-tr.psct@nhs.net or telephone 01225 825656.

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